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Large, complex operations require many specialized skills that must be interrelated and integrated, and demand the concerted action of those involved. A dean who has to establish this consensus at a college or university needs the wholehearted cooperation of the department chairman. The differences in roles and relationships among dean, department head, and faculty are both necessary and important. The dean must take the overall institutional view and strive for the production of a balanced educational product. Faculty members should try to promote the view of their particular discipline while considering the overall educational effect to be achieved in students. The department head articulates and interprets the overall institutional concerns and transmits them to the faculty. No dean can be knowledgeable in all fields of instruction over which he has jurisdiction, and has to rely on the knowledge and experience of the department chairman, who is the spokesman for the intellectual aims and vitality of his discipline. Among his many functions, the department chairman sets the course for the direction and development of the department, sets up conditions of faculty service that allow faculty members to make their best contributions to the welfare of the students and the department, and balances the needs of the department against the needs and resources of the institution. His most valuable service is performed in the area of faculty selection, recruitment, and promotion. (WM)

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RELATIONSHIP OF THE DEPARTMENTAL CHAIRMAN

TO THE ACADEMIC DEAN

by

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There is among academic administrators what I can only characterize as universal agreement that the most important single person in the academic world is the departmental chairman.

I say this not to flatter you, but to state a simple fact. The department head is the stimulus and goad to dean and faculty alike. He is the pace-setter, the curriculum-maker. He is the tone-setter for relations of the faculty with administrators, for relations with other faculty, for relations with students. He is the life-line of the college or university because deans and provosts and presidents fade from the scene but department heads march proudly on. It is they who have in their hands the power to make an institution great.

If during these few days you can dream up a picture of what you as department head want to be and know you ought to be, and if you are so inspired that you head for home with a heartfelt resolve to achieve this ideal - then this Institute will have been a success.

The departmental chairman's intelligence, professionalism, knowledge, contagious inspiration and non-authoritarian leadership is the soil out of which collegiate education worthy of this nation can grow. If he is barren, sterile and devitalized by

the unrepaired erosions of habit, tradition and time, the college will reflect him in its other faculty, its student body, its idealism and its atmosphere. If he is unmoved and inert in the midst of the potential building of monuments more lasting than bronze, and of the chain reaction through which alone the American college can rebuild through its educational product the heart and soul of the world, so will his department be inert and unmoved, and so will his students be.

If the department head is content with the routine, the details, the curriculum, and the instructional procedures that he found when he took over as head of the department, he doesn't belong there. If he is content to keep hollow machinery operating the way it always did and because it always did, he doesn't belong there. If his mind is attached to the past because it is the past and suspicious of the present and the future, he doesn't belong there. If he is unable or unwilling to rid himself of busy-ness with clerical minutiae and cannot delegate without nagging and constant intrusion into and interference with the delegated functions, he doesn't belong there. If he cannot or will not be a student of higher education and of his discipline who satisfies his hunger for improvement by constant rapport with everything of significance transpiring in higher education and in his discipline in theorizing, in new procedures, and in research, he cannot be a leader of an alive department. If the chairman is narrow, lazy or smug, or if he lacks responsiveness to adventure, there is little hope.

John Wesley Gould in his book, The Academic Deanship (page 69), tells us that academic deans regard their relationship with department chairmen as at least twice as important as their relationships with the president or with leading members of the faculty.

From the viewpoint of management theory, it is perfectly plain why this must be the case. No single individual has either the time or the ability to do everything by himself. In large complex operations, such as a college or university, requiring many specialized skills, it is plain that these skills must be interrelated and integrated in such a way that an effect is produced which far exceeds the capacity of any single individual. Some form, then, of concerted action is absolutely necessary. While this concerted action need not proceed from a unanimous viewpoint, it does need to proceed from a substantial consensus of the wills of those involved.

To establish this consensus, to make it evolve is the function of the dean, but he is powerless to do this without the wholehearted and enthusiastic cooperation of the chairmen of his departments.

Moreover, no dean can possibly be knowledgeable in all fields of instruction over which he has jurisdiction. The day of the authentic messiah (omniscient and omnicompetent) has passed -- and it might also be added that even presidents are not, regularly at least, gifted with the messianic charisma.

The wise dean relies on the knowledge and experience of his departmental chairmen in a given field, where his own competence is minimal or, at best, very general.

The chairman of the department or division in his dealings with the dean must not be a rubber stamp. He should serve as the dean's academic conscience. He should be an active, disturbing and persuasive conscience to the dean. The department head does not serve his dean or his institution well by being a timid or easily discouraged exponent of academic excellence. He stands before the dean as the spokesman for the intellectural aims and vitality of his discipline. In none of his other roles is he in a more strategic position to further the interests of academic excellence than when he advises the dean. Diplomatically and cogently, he must press the case for scholarly advancement, for advancement even when it costs money, as it usually does.

If he has the two qualities the late Dean DeVane of Yale cites as the most necessary for the administrator's trade, patience and cunning, he will help the dean to do his academic duties without at the same time making plans to get a new department head.

There are some differences here in roles and relationships among dean, department head, and faculty, and I think it wise to advert to them. They are all necessary and important, and this precisely because they are different. The dean must necessarily take the overall institutional view and he must constantly strive for the production of a balanced educational product. In contrast, the members of the faculty, very properly, should strive to promote the view of their own particular discipline, not losing sight, however, of the overall educational effect to be achieved in the student.

In the smallest educational institutions it is entirely possible that the function of the departmental chairman may be greatly reduced and all individual faculty members may deal directly with the dean. But in institutions of any size the strong right arm of the dean is the departmental chairman. It is through him that overall institutional concerns must be transmitted to the faculty.

It is through him that these concerns must be articulated and interpreted. This necessarily implies a close working

relationship between the departmental chairman and the dean. Such a relationship calls for a certain forthright honesty which alone can form the basis for a lasting relationship of confidence over a period of years. It is the duty and the obligation of the department head to present the needs of his department, and the dean has an obligation to listen sympathetically and sincerely try to understand these needs. Both the dean and the departmental chairman must recognize that both of them must live within the fiscal and other limitations of the institution.

When faculty members are discontented about a policy or a contemplated course of action, it often becomes the duty of the departmental chairmen to transmit this to the dean. In such circumstances, it is extremely important that the dean give a full and sympathetic hearing. Often such a hearing, in itself, will relieve much of the tension and anxiety which have been created. Depending upon the circumstances, the dean must then transmit as faithfully as he can to higher officials, not only the complaint as it was presented to him, but also his own evaluation and recommendation. And, having presented the case, he must then try to take as objective a view as possible and must be willing to live with the decision and support it, even though he may not personally be in agreement with it.

The dean has a very important function to play in stimulating growth within a department and most of this function of stimulation must be exercised through his relationship with the departmental chairman. It is only when there is a very good rapport then, that this relationship can be most productive of results for the growth of the department.

Now I would like to present some rather brief comments as a dean concerning the things I most want to see in the chairman of a department. These I have grouped around three main headings and in the discussion period you may wish to explore them in some greater individual detail. I have grouped these comments around the topics of leadership, faculty, and finance.

Plato once said that the things that are honored in a country will be practiced there. In season and out of season the chairman of the department must honor the right things. It is only by these concrete manifestations of his hierarchy of values that he will gradually communicate to the members of his department, both faculty and students, a sense of those things which he regards as most important for the development of the department and indeed of the entire institution. He must consciously work to evolve a consensus among the members of the department on the objectives of the department and the direction of its future development. These must simultaneously fit both the overall goals of the institution and must be in step with developments taking place within the discipline. The department head who

is satisfied with the status quo will very shortly be the fossilized head of a defunct form. If there is one lesson that is clear from the history of education, it is that education which fails to grow and develop with the times, will shortly cease to be. The department which does not develop in step with progress in its discipline will soon be a relic, unwanted by those who should be its students, and unmourned by former students. The chairman is the leader. He must set the course for the direction and development of the department, working always with and through his faculty, but also looking toward an organic development which puts the aims of the institution, the needs of the students, and the personal whims of individual faculty members in proper perspective.

The chairman will lead best by his own example. He will teach the freshmen, at least in rotation. And he will teach the most stimulating class. He will perform the most stimulating research. He will seek and obtain research grants. He will weld a team. He will show his own personal concern for the personal professional development of each faculty member. He will praise them in public and admonish them individually in private. He will know when best to use the stick or the carrot. He will be available to his faculty when they need him. And while he need not always keep an open door, he will fully realize the importance of always keeping an open mind.

In the area of faculty the departmental chairman will perform his most valuable service. There is no dean I have ever met who would claim that the program, the curriculum, is the key to greatness in an institution. It is just a tool. The real key to great education is a great faculty. Without a great faculty, the world's finest curriculum is just a piece of paper. With a great faculty, it is quite possible that you don't even need a curriculum. The departmental chairman will make his most important recommendations and his most important decisions as he recruits and promotes the faculty of his department. He must interpret the institution to the prospective faculty member and must seek the closest possible fit between faculty member and institution. This requires vigorous and continuous effort, regular attendance at meetings of the professional organizations associated with the particular discipline, a good broad acquaintance with those established department heads most likely to be able to help him. He must seek maximum quality within the resources available. In all of this he will naturally be aided by the members of his department, but in the end he must put all the factors into focus and evolve a consensus. He must within the department set up conditions of faculty service which will enable each faculty member to make his own best contribution to the welfare of the department and of the students whom the department serves. These include teaching load, class hours and times, students to be advised whether undergraduates or graduates, office furniture, telephones, secretarial help, and an appropriate system of rewards which will stimulate both good teaching and good research. And when the time comes to recommend for salary increases and for promotion he will

make his recommendations consistent with the objectives of the department and of the institution, quite apart from his own personal feelings about the individual faculty member. He will strive to be objective and to be just and to treat all in accordance with their objective merits. He will thus honor in his department the things he wishes to see practiced there.

The third area for comment deals with finance. Here the chairman of the department must balance the needs of his department against the needs and resources of the entire institution. He should honestly represent the needs as he sees them to his dean, neither underestimating these needs nor exaggerating them, and he must be careful to present them in their completeness. There is nothing which undermines more the mutual confidence that must flow from dean to chairman and back again than a partial estimate of costs when a proposal is made. Nothing reveals the quality and motives of a department and a chairman as much as partial financial information attached to a full proposal. Either the proposal is ill-conceived and lacking in sufficient study, or the department is seeking to obtain a commitment without revealing all the facts. The chairman has the obligation to represent fully the needs of the department to the dean and he must also present the consequences that will follow if these needs are not met. The dean needs this kind of information if he is to represent the needs of the department and make his own recommendation. Once this has been done then the chairman must realize and be willing to accept the budgetary decision and enforce it within the department even though he (and perhaps the dean as well) are not in agreement with it. Here too he shows his leadership. In his financial recommendations concerning his faculty the chairman spells out in the clearest and most unmistakable terms what the faculty member means to the department. In this process of status symbols and rewards so many factors must be taken into consideration and balanced that chairmen and deans often wish they had the wisdom of Solomon in seeking solutions to this most involved of human problems. Some system of recommendation from chairman to dean surely seems desirable except perhaps in the smallest institutions, and the dean after consulting the chairman, within the fiscal limits imposed upon him, must do his best to allocate limited resources in the most effective manner possible. In today's world, this would seem to mean a firm adherence to a merit system of salary increases rather than to automatic increments. It means too that there must be concern not just with the amount of salary increase to be given to an individual faculty member but a concern with the overall level of faculty salaries in the institution.

Speaking at an educational conference, the former president of Brown University, Henry Wriston, said: "The functions of the administrator are as the sands of the sea-myriad. I shall not attempt to enumerate them just to sort out a few grains from the shelving beach." I make the same apology. Out of the countless ways in which a department head generates, encourages, promotes, rewards, and evolves a consensus, I have given only a few examples. I have chosen just a few grains from the shelving beach and, making no pretensions to being an oyster, I have been unable to serve you pearls.